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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 THE HAGUE 002567

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/07/2013

TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [RS](#) [NL](#)

SUBJECT: DUTCH RESPONSE TO CHECHNYA ELECTION

REF: A. STATE 283165

[B](#). GOLDING - MORROW ET. AL. EMAIL 10/06/03

Classified By: Political Counselor Mary E. Daly for reasons 1.5 (b and d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: PolOff delivered demarche points on the Chechnya election (ref A) to Dutch MFA OSCE Task Force Senior Policy Officer Robert-Jan Siegert on October 6, 2003. Siegert said the Dutch agree with U.S. points, but the Dutch position varies slightly. He noted FM de Hoop Scheffer, in his capacity as OSCE Chair, refrained from saying the election fell short of international standards during yesterday's October 6 press conference in Warsaw, opting to instead enumerate the problems but withhold final judgement until results are in. During the meeting, the Dutch shared with PolOff a "very confidential" EU draft statement on the Chechnya election (ref B) to be discussed today during the COEST and PSC meetings in Brussels. (Note: see paragraph 4 for draft text). Siegert said the EU consensus on Chechnya is "much more critical" than one year ago, and believes this is due to EU partners feeling less optimistic now that a reconciliation is possible in the near future. End Summary

[1](#)2. (C) PolOff delivered demarche points on Chechnya election (ref A) to Dutch MFA OSCE Task Force Senior Policy Officer Robert-Jan Siegert. Siegert said the Dutch agree with U.S. points, and have been engaged in an intensive effort to coordinate an EU approach. He noted the Friday, October 3, conversation between Ambassador Daan Everts and A/S Beth Jones as part of this effort. Siegert said the Dutch position differs slightly from the U.S., pointing to FM de Hoop Scheffer's statement at yesterday's October 6 press conference in Warsaw. Speaking as the OSCE Chair, de Hoop Scheffer said there were a number of problems with the election, including the lack of independent media, and the withdrawal of legitimate candidates prior to voting. He urged the Russians to "engage in a meaningful policy that would bring about reconciliation," one that must include an improvement in the human rights situation and rule of law, as well as a condemnation of any form of violence. FM De Hoop Scheffer said he hoped the OSCE would be able to contribute to the process of reconciliation on the ground in Chechnya. Siegert noted FM de Hoop Scheffer stopped short of saying the elections did not meet international standards, but chose to say instead that it was difficult to judge at this stage because ODIHR was not able to monitor the election process and the final results are not yet in.

[1](#)3. (C) During the meeting, the Dutch shared with PolOff a "very confidential" EU draft statement on the Chechnya election (ref B). The statement was drafted by Germany, commented on by France, and circulated informally to various EU partners. According to the Dutch, the draft statement, included below in paragraph 4, will be discussed October 7 in Brussels during the COEST meeting, and most likely concluded at the PSC meeting the same day. Siegert believes the final draft should not be that different from de Hoop Scheffer's statement during the Warsaw press conference, but cautioned that it is sometimes hard to tell with the EU. Siegert said the EU consensus on Chechnya is "much more critical" than one year ago, and believes this is due to EU partners feeling less optimistic now that a reconciliation is possible in the near future.

[1](#)4. (C) DRAFT EU DECLARATION ON PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN CHECHNYA

[1](#)I. The EU takes note of the holding of presidential elections in Chechnya/Russian Federation on October 5, 2003 and its preliminary results as presented by...(Presidency would have to add official Russian language).

II. The EU has made clear on numerous occasions that it supports all genuine efforts to attain a lasting peace in Chechnya. (presidential declaration of 26.09.03,ROM/0912/03) It urged all parties to the conflict to end violence immediately. Furthermore, the EU called for a political solution to the conflict. The EU and Russia in their Joint Statement at the Summit in St. Petersburg on May, 31,2003 expressed the hope that the recently started political process as well as the economic and social reconstruction would lead to the restoration of the rule of law, thus promoting the protection of human rights and to a genuine reconciliation in Chechnya.

(Joint Statement St. Petersburg).

III. Against this background the EU followed the electoral process in Chechnya with great attention. It underlined that

it was of paramount importance that the population of Chechnya - including those temporarily displaced - recognizes the legitimacy of elections. (presidential declaration of 26.09.03, ROM/0912/03). However, the EU had to note with great concern negative developments in the run-up to the presidential elections in Chechnya, in particular the lack of real pluralism of candidatures to the presidency, the absence of independent media in Chechnya as well as the deplorable security situation in the area.

IV. Applying accepted OSCE/ODIHR standards to assess the conduct and the results of the presidential elections in Chechnya the EU expresses serious doubts that these elections can be called free and fair. The EU therefore, once more, urges the Russian authorities to investigate all indications of the intimidation of candidates and allegations of the manipulation of the electoral process. The EU is not convinced that the elections just held hold sufficient credibility with the population of Chechnya to advance the process towards a political settlement and could even set that process back. (language used by US-DASS Pifer)

V. The EU appreciated the Russian Government's commitments entered into before the referendum concerning the improvement of living conditions, and amnesty, autonomy provisions, compensation for destroyed property and the restoration of the rule of law. Regrettably, results achieved in these fields so far are insufficient. Substantial progress to a peaceful life in Chechnya is still lacking. In particular, reports about ongoing human rights violations continue to be an issue of the gravest concern to the EU. (language used by DASS Pifer)

VI. The EU once again would like to express its hope that verbal commitments will be followed by their implementation, that immediate serious action will contribute to a significant improvement of the human rights situation in Chechnya and will bridge the divide between the bridge the divide between the Russian authorities and the population of Chechnya. (declaration of ODIHR-director Strohal of 28.03.) The EU urges the Russian authorities to do their utmost to advance a genuine political process and bring peace and stability to Chechnya (OSCE declaration). It calls upon the Russian Government to intensify its cooperation with international organisations as agreed in the EU-Russia Joint Statement at St. Petersburg.

VII. The EU appreciated the opportunity given by the Russian Government to the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations for displaced people, Mr. Francis Deng, for visiting camps of refugees in Ingushetia. The EU views with concern the situation of refugees in the North Caucasus and condemns all attempts to put pressure on them in order to make them return to Chechnya on a coercive or involuntary basis.

VIII. The EU reaffirms that it recognizes the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation as well as its right to combat terrorism. The EU condemns any kind of violence, in particular terrorist acts which have repeatedly caused the death of numerous innocent lives in different parts of the Russian Federation and which endanger the prospects for a political solution. (partly: Joint Statement St. Petersburg) The EU is convinced that a genuine political settlement of the conflict in Chechnya based on reconciliation and the effective protection of human rights forms a key element for an eradication of terrorism in the area.

SOBEL